

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

MILTON, PA , IN THE M. E. CHURCH.

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE

HALL OF MILTON LODGE,

A. Y. FREEMASONS, NO. 256,

JUNE 24, 1863, A. L. 5863.

BEING THE FESTIVAL OF

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST,

BY

BENJ. PARKE, L. L. D.,

Past Grand High Priest of the Grand H. Royal
Arch Chapter, and Past R. E. Grand
Commander Knights Templar,
of Pennsylvania.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF MILTON LODGE.

BLOOMSBURG :
P. JOHN, Printer,
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CORRESPONDENCE.

MILTON, PA., October 8th, 1863.

BENJAMIN PARKE, ESQ.:—

Dear Sir and Brother:—Having listened with great interest to the able address delivered by you at the Dedication of Milton Lodge, on June 24th last, and being instructed by said Lodge to request a copy of the same for publication, it affords us very great pleasure to perform this duty, believing as we do, in common with the many Brethren who heard you on that occasion, that said publication will do much good to the cause both of Masonry and Religion.

Hoping that this expression of our desire will find acceptance with you, we remain Dear Sir, very respectfully and Fraternaly Yours,

R. E. WILSON,
JOHN G. FUREY, } Committee.
C. C. STRAUB,

PARKVALE, SUSQUEHANNA Co., PA., October 14, 1863.

BROTHERS:—

I cannot but feel greatly honored by your complimentary note of the 8th inst., requesting a copy of my address, delivered at the dedication of your Masonic Hall, for publication. Although I think you have formed too high an opinion as to its merits, I do not feel at liberty to withhold it from the request of your Lodge, for which it was prepared.

I am truly and fraternally yours,

BENJAMIN PARKE.

To Brothers—

R. E. WILSON,
JOHN G. FUREY, } Committee.
C. C. STRAUB,

THE ADDRESS.

Right Worshipful D. Deputy Grand Master and Grand Chaplain ; Worshipful Masters, Wardens and Brethren :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Both Masonic and Christian Antiquity, agreed upon the 24th day of June, as the birth-day of SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST; and from time immemorial, have Freemasons and Christians, in all civilized or christian lands, upon this day, commemorated his wonderful and mysterious nativity; and called to mind his many transcendent virtues. The one, from tradition, claiming him as their pupil in his youth, and their patron in his manhood; and the other, from revelation, claiming him as the Heaven-predicted child of a barren woman; the prophet of the Highest; the Elias which was to come; the har-binger of the Messiah; the first preacher of the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; a man great in the sight of the Lord; filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

The written history of St. John the Baptist, like that of most of the other Scripture worthies, and like that of the order of which he was a member, is meagre, in regard to the incidents of his life. For although the angel Gabriel was sent from Heaven, to predict his birth, and to declare his greatness in God's estimation, all that inspiration has seen fit to record of his character and doings, hardly covers a page in the Holy Bible. We are there informed of the godly character of his parents, and that the fame and expectations of him as a child, connected with the circumstances of his circumcision and naming, was spread abroad throughout the country, and produced a fear on all that dwelt around about them. Tradition and contemporary history inform us that, all this coming to the ears of Herod, the jealous and cruel Tetrarch of Galilee, he endeavored to have John destroyed at the time of the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem; and had his father Zaccharias slain at the temple, because he refused to inform where the child could be found.

His mother, probably warned of God, as were the parents of Jesus, fled with her infant son into the wilderness of Judea, where *she* soon afterwards died; leaving her orphan boy in the care of the Essenes, one of the three sects into which the Jews were divided; where inspiration informs us "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit; and was in the deserts until his shewing unto Israel."

The Essenes—well decribed by Josephus—himself a Pharisee—and by other historians, were the least numerous, though most worthy, of the sects of the Jews. They were a well organized society, under a rigid and in some respects severe dicipline, remarkable for their piety and eminent for their fidelity; trained to the exercise of charity, benevolence and hospitality; especially to those of their own sect, whether neighbors or strangers. They cheerfully adopted the children of others, while young, pliable and fit for training; whom they thereafter regarded as their own kindred, and trained, and educated, and moulded them according to their own manners and customs. "They lived," says Josephus, "the same kind of life as do those

whom the Greeks call Pythagorians." "Many of them dwell in cities, and if any of them come from other places, all they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go among such as they never saw before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. For this reason, they carry nothing at all with them when they travel into remote parts, except their weapons for fear of thieves. There is in every city where they live, one appointed to take care of strangers, and provide for them such necessities and garments as they need. Many of this sect lived in the desert, some alone in tents, or caves, subsisting upon the fruits and such other things as were at hand; devoting themselves to study, contemplation, acts of piety, and training the young."

Standing aloof, as well from the society, as the pride, ostentation and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Saducees; declining attendance at the feasts and gatherings at Jerusalem, despising many of the unmeaning traditional ceremonies of the Elders, which made void the moral precepts of the law, and were only for outward show; and quietly attending to their own concerns, this sect escaped the pointed denunciations of the Savior, against Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites, &c. There is no evidence that John was ever at Jerusalem; nor are the Essenes, as a sect, mentioned in any of the gospels.—Several of the apostles were of this sect. Some were disciples of John before being called by the Savior, and unmistakable marks of their tenets and customs, may be seen, not only among the apostles, while their master was upon earth, but also in the early church, which they founded.

The Essenes were a *secret* society—the *Free Masons* of that nation, as were the Pythagorians in Greece and other nations where they existed. These different names of branches of our order, were probably assumed or given in like manner as Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, &c., have been adopted or given to different branches of the christian church. Says Josephus—"The Essenes hold their meetings in secret, in an apartment of their own, into which it is not permitted to any one of another sect to enter." Before any one is admitted into their society "he is obliged to take tremendous oaths, that in the first place he will *exercise piety towards God, and observe justice towards men*; do no harm to any one, either of his own accord, or by the command of others; that he will always hate the wicked, and be an assistant to the righteous; that he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority; because no one obtains the government without God's assistance; that if he be in authority, he will at no time whatever abuse his authority, nor endeavor to outshine his subjects, either in his garments or any other finery; that he will be perpetually a lover of Truth, and reprove those that tell lies; that he will keep his hand from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains; that he will neither conceal anything from those of his own sect, nor discover any of their doctrines to others; No! not though any one should compel him so to do at the hazard of his life. Moreover he swears to communicate their doctrines to no one, any otherwise than as he received them himself; that he will abstain from robbery, and will equally preserve the books belonging to their sect, and the names of their angels or messengers." "These," continues Josephus, "are the oaths by which they secure their proselytes to themselves." They were abstemious in their diet, quietly partaking at their meals of "one loaf and a single plate of one sort of food." When meeting in lodge or at their meals, which they regarded as a holy service, to be both begun and ended by praising God; considering it unlawful to *taste* of the food before grace was said by their master or priest; they wore a white garment, and at all times a girdle or white leather apron. Thus John the Baptist, who had not only been trained and educated by this sect, but as our traditions inform us, was a master or priest in high authority among them, adhered through life to his plain and substantial garb and diet. "He had

his raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey."

All historians agree that the Essenes were an ancient secret fraternity. Pliny, refers them to an antiquity as remote as the building of the temple. Basnage, says they existed in all parts of the world, and admitted to their secrets men of every religion and rank in life. Philo says, they adopted many of the mysteries of the Egyptian priests; the magi of Persia, and the gymnosophists of India; and although respected by all good men, for the earnestness of their conduct, and the innocence of their order, they suffered severe persecutions from the Romans, and that the order was abolished about the middle of the fifth century.

On the great day of atonement, the 10th of the Jewish month of Tisri, or about the 30th of September, St. John being about thirty years of age, commenced his public ministry in the wilderness of Judea, in the neighborhood of the river Jordan, at or near the place where the Israelites crossed that stream, in their first entrance into the promised land; and where Joshua set up twelve stones of remembrance, that the locality might not be forgotten. Here, he was indeed a burning and shining light. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." And although his ministry was short—not over fifteen months—his burning eloquence roused the whole Jewish nation.—“There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” No man—not even the Savior—in so short a time, ever made so great and perceptible an impression upon the public, by his preaching, as is recorded of John the Baptist.

The highest order of pulpit eloquence, was never acquired in the cloister or college hall. Neither can it be learned from books alone. Living in towns and cities, enclosed within walls of brick or stone, chained to the wheel of a college routine of study, in man-made books, to be studied according to man-invented rules, the *soul* of man becomes contracted, dwarfed, and withered; though the *mind* may be expanded and informed. Continually surrounded by the works and monuments of human skill, reading and contemplating the efforts of human investigation and human learning only, everything is as little as the human mind, as narrow as human purpose, as imperfect as human work. Neither can that divine knowledge which a religious teacher should possess, be learned or imbibed in the busy and bustling scenes of life; amidst the noise of folly, the clamors of parties, the confusion of opinions, the struggle for success or prominence, and the allurements of vice. In the charge at opening a lodge, we are, as Masons, reminded, “that wisdom seeks the secret shade, and the lowly cell, designed for contemplation. There enthroned she sits, delivering her sacred oracles; and there we are to seek her.” He who would obtain or increase the wisdom which cometh from above, must at least occasionally retire from the world, “commune with his own heart, and be still.”

The devout man, whose mind and soul are imbued with the truth and spirit of God's revelation, who not only believes *in*, but feels and realizes all around him an ever present Deity, in whom he lives and moves and has his being, will delight to hold converse with nature in her solitudes—alone with God. There untrameled by college rules or seminary customs, to study the Grand Architect of the Universe, and learn His character in His works. To behold Him by day in the sun, as from his mid-day throne, with lavish munificence, he pours his golden rays of light and heat upon a thousand dependent worlds; or, to view Him by night, as from those thousand worlds He scatters their borrowed and softened light in silvery streams, to gladden and cheer the millions of his creation. To gaze upon the mountain that lifts its

stately form, meeting the clouds that repose upon its summit, as of erst—the Chariot of Jehovah—they hung upon Sinai's awful brow; or, to look upon the soft and lovely valleys, that—rejoicing in Him who hath clothed them with verdure—lie in peaceful rest at its base. To contrast the lofty pine that has stood for centuries, and defied a thousand storms, with the modest flower of yesterday that bends to every breeze. To hear the voice of God as distinctly in the murmur of the brook, the sighing of the breeze, or in the patter of the rain, as in the whirlwind, the cataract, or the thunder, that, rolling through the dome of Heaven, seems to shake the earth. And amid all, to feel and realize that this Being, whose power, majesty and goodness shine forth in all these works and doings, is not only the Great Master Builder, the upholder and Governor of all things, but that in His character of God—merciful, He has provided a way in which we, unworthy as we may feel ourselves, can approach and commune with Him, as “Our Father in Heaven.” That he not only guides and controls the orbs that wheel and career in space; does His will and pleasure in the armies of Heaven, and among the nations and inhabitants of the earth; but equally watches over and cares for, the sparrow that flits from tree to tree, and the angel that flies from world to world; the meanest insect and the mightiest cherubim. That at peace with Him we are safe! Enclosed in everlasting arms, and covered with the broad shield of Omnipotence; we can defy even the last enemy; knowing that he has been conquered, and made the servant of our Great Grand Master.

The bold and lofty eloquence of St. John was the natural outflowing of a mind and soul *thus* trained and warmed by communion with the Grand Architect of the Universe, in His own school; amid the grandeur of His own works and doings. There, in converse with the Angels of the covenant, away from the turmoil and influence of the world, he had learned the will and purpose of His Maker, “who revealeth His secrets unto His servants, the Prophets.” There he waxed strong in spirit, prepared to carry out the purpose of his ministry—to declare and show to Israel the truth.

Nothing truly great or noble ever was or will be accomplished by human effort, unless commenced and prosecuted in honest sincerity; with a *faith* that the object aimed at is right, and a truthful, steadfast purpose to carry it out. Such faith and purpose, is the grand talisman of success, as well in temporal as in eternal concerns. It is the characteristic of the Hero, wherever he has been, or may be found. With it, man is a giant; without it a pigmy.

Behold then this youthful, and in the refinements of the polite world, unlearned and untrained preacher, under the guiding, inspiring and life-giving energy of this principle; clad in the coarse habiliments of his order, occupying his pulpit on the banks of Jordan. His church, the great temple of nature; its pillars of wisdom, strength and beauty, standing on the world's circumference; its covering, the cloudy canopy or star-decked heaven, frescoed by the hand of the Almighty, and illumined with his glory. See him drawing to his ministry, from out of the rich and luxurious cities of Judea, the proud, cold and formal Pharisee; the infidel, philosophic and sneering Sadducee; with vast multitudes of the common people, “from Jerusalem and all the region round about Jordan.” Listen to him, as, with the one great truth before his prophetic vision—his mission to prepare the way for Him, who was indeed “the light of the world,” preaching “repentance for the remission of sins “with such eloquence and convincing power,” that “all were baptised of him in Jordan confessing their sins.” Hear him rebuke the multitude, as a generation of vipers; admonishing them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and no longer to boast of having Abraham for their father; for that the time had come, when appropriate fruit was expected from all, who hoped to escape the fire of God's wrath. Especially my brethren

let us give heed to his enforcement of the virtues of his order ; exhorting the publicans or tax-gatherers to exact no more from the people than had been assessed ; instructing the soldiers not to take advantage of their position and power to oppress, or to extort more than was due them ; and impressing upon *all* men the duties of benevolence and charity. And steadily holding to his principles of truth and integrity, forgetting everything but God and duty, see him repudiating the spiritual honors, which a wonder-stricken and almost worshipping multitude would have conferred upon him ; pointing away from himself and bidding them behold Him "whose shoes he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose." "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world."

The circumstances attending the close of his short but brilliant life, also exhibit the same unswerving adherence to truth and principle. His fame attracted the notice of Herod, who hearing him, was moved to do many commendable things. But when the prophet—true to his obligations to rebuke evil—told him that it was not lawful for him to live with Herodias, his brother's wife, his ire was roused, and he had him cast into prison, in the tower and castle of Macherus. It is probable that Herod did not intend to take the life of John, as he remained in prison some eighteen months ; but at a birth-day entertainment, while under the influence of wine, he was entrapped by Herodias and her accomplished daughter, to have him beheaded. Revelation informs us that his disciples took his body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. Tradition says he was buried between Elisha and Obadiah the Prophets. Josephus relates at large, the wickedness, both of the marriage of Herod and murder of John ; and also the dreadful judgements which soon after fell upon all the parties concerned.

Thus ended the earthly career of our brother and patron Saint John the Baptist ; whose birthday has always been observed, as well by Free Masonry as the Church. Like a burning meteor he came from the desert, and for a brief period illumined the wilderness of Judea by his shining. Having finished his mission, he returned to Him who sent him, laying aside his raiment of camel's hair and girdle—the regalia of his earthly lodge—for the robe of purer white, and the palm of victory, in the Grand Lodge above—in the presence of his Master, whose advent upon earth he was sent to proclaim.

The simple virtues he taught, and the plain though comprehensive duties he enjoined upon those who enquired of him, "what shall we do ?" have been the recognized teachings of Masonry in every age and clime. "Honesty and integrity in all the vocations of life—benevolence and charity by those who *have*, to all who have *need* of this world's goods. These teachings—always right and appropriate—seem to have a peculiar binding force at the present time, when everything connected with mankind, appears to be in a state of trouble and perplexity. The rills of wickedness, hitherto flowing almost unnoticed, gathered into a dark stream, are now overflowing their banks and spreading out in wild disorder. Kingdoms, nations, states and families, at war with each other ; sending wailing, misery and death into almost every neighborhood and family, causing "hearts to fail for fear and for looking for those things that are coming on the earth." At such time it is not only right and proper in all, but especially incumbent upon *us*, from whom much is expected, that the bonds of affection and brotherhood be drawn closer together, and the fruit of our teachings be manifest in our work. Not to be seen of men or praised by the outside world, but in the fulfilment of our vows ; in obedience to the commands of our Master on High. "Wherefore," said a brother of the past century, "do you carry *corn, wine and oil* in your processions, but to remind you, that in the pilgrimage of human life, you are to impart a portion of your bread to feed the hungry ; to send a cup of your wine to cheer the sorrowful ; and to pour the healing oil of your conso-

lation, into the wounds which sickness has made in the bodies, or afflictions rent in the hearts of your fellow-travelers."

Let us then hasten to perform these affectionate services, and to fulfil our law of love; assured that the blessing of those who are ready to perish will come upon us, and the heart of the widow and orphan swell with gratitude, and be made glad with joy. And in that day when all secrets shall be made known, our enemies shall learn, that the *greatest depth of Masonic secrecy, are its unpublished acts of beneficence and mercy*. If these things be done with proper motives, being the fruits of a true *Faith*, we may rejoice in *Hope*, and living in perfect *Charity* with all men, finally receive a *Password* into the Grand Lodge above, where Peace, Order and Harmony, shall eternally reign, and where the richest spiritual refreshments have been provided by "Our Father in Heaven."

And now Brethren, having briefly considered the life and character of a holy man and eminent patron of our Order, may we not, with profit to ourselves, and perhaps gratification to those present, who have never visited the inner sanctuary of our mysteries, turn our attention to the Institution itself, and, for a few moments, glance at its history, character, and present standing. In all these respects, I venture here to assert, if well considered, it stands *peerless*—the greatest moral wonder of the world! It is the oldest and yet most vigorous system or institution in existence. Commencing prior to all written history or tradition, outside of itself; passing—like the light its expressive symbol—noiselessly along the track of ages; leaving in unmistakeable language, legible traces of its existence and character, inscribed and engraven upon nearly every ancient pillar, monument or temple, erected upon the world's surface; with clear reference to its existence and influence, in most of the ancient volumes which have come down to us, and a large part of its ritual and teaching, the language of inspiration. Mingling with, and largely permeating, and either controlling or taking the hue of, the ceremonies and character of religion, whether Patriarchal, Pagan or Jewish; in many countries holding the key of knowledge, and controlling the development of science, art and morality, during four thousand years of the world's existence; extending itself as if by a law of necessity controlling the heart of humanity, into every society or organization, whether of tribe, colony or nation; maintaining to a great extent, a symbolic language, indicating a common lineage; inculcating everywhere and at all times, the principle of common brotherhood, and the highest grade of morality, known and recognized among the people; it stands now, though gray with age, more fresh and vigorous than ever; neither courting favor, or shunning examination; for its antiquity proves its purity, its usefulness, and its permanence. No combination of wicked men, or for a wicked purpose, ever lasted long. The want of virtue, or a virtuous purpose, on which alone mutual trust and confidence can be founded, soon festers, corrupts, divides, and destroys any institution. Had Freemasonry been erected upon any other foundation than the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind, it would have been but as the flitting sunbeam, which passes away and leaves no traces behind. It would long since have been crushed and destroyed by the enmity and persecution it has endured, or like the thousand other institutions and societies it has survived, died from disease, infirmity or age. The splendid cities, magnificent temples, and lofty obelisks, of the old world, erected by masonry, have fallen into ruins or mouldered into dust. Empires, kingdoms and states have passed away, and been buried beneath the rubbish of centuries; while Freemasonry, that humbles man and exalts Deity, that disregards worldly wealth and honor, and looks to the moral worth of man—the qualities of his heart,—still survives; and while man shall continue to be a social being, with a yearning for intimate communion with his fellow man; while man shall have wants to

be supplied, and the widow and the orphan shall claim his protection, our Order will be a *necessity*; and until the curse shall be lifted off, and rescinded, and man restored to the state in which God created him, Masons will meet and kindle in each other the social affections, which find no communion in the crowd of life, and little sympathy in a cold and selfish world.

Freemasonry is considered under two denominations—Operative or Instrumental; Speculative or Moral.

Operative Freemasonry in its ancient history, not only refers to the use of masonic tools or implements, the art of erecting or adorning in architecture, but includes all the liberal sciences, especially geometry; which was anciently considered as synonymous with Freemasonry. As such, its principles were present with the G. A. O. T. U., when by “wisdom He founded the earth, and by understanding established the Heavens”. When, as He declared to His servant Job, “He laid the foundations of the earth, declared its measure, and fastened the corner stone thereof. When he laid a *compass* upon the bosom of the deep, and stretched a *line* upon the face of the dry land; when He hung the clouds and the starry canopy, as the covering thereof, and made darkness its swaddling band; when He parted the light and scattered the east wind upon the earth; when He commanded the morning and caused the day spring to know his place; when He made a pathway for the overflowing of waters, and a way for the lightning and thunder; when He shut up the sea with bars and said hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and hero let thy proud waves be stayed; when He established the ordinances of Heaven and set the dominion thereof in the earth; when he bound the sweet influences of the Pleiades or loosed the band of Orion; when he brought forth Mazaroth in his season, and guided Arcturus, with his sons; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

Speculative or Moral Freemasonry, the building, adorning and improving the mind and soul, is synonymous with truth, wisdom, virtue, moral light—all which are direct emanations from the Father of Light, in whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning; the great Master Builder and Creator of all things. He who, at that uncertain period, when “the earth was without form and void; and darkness rested upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” said “Let there be **LIGHT**, and there was **LIGHT**.”

This was not that material light now beaming around *us*, emanating from the Sun, which, for nearly six thousand years, has hung in the firmament of Heaven, sending forth light and heat—the source of all physical power—to the worlds rolling around him. The sun was not then created, nor had any of the lights been made, and set in the firmament of Heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to divide the day from the night. It was therefore a direct effusion from the Divinity—a lucid splendor or glory—such, we may conjecture, as the celestial Hierarchy, who shouted for joy when the corner stone of Creation was laid, and tuned their sweetest harps around Bethlehem’s Manger, delight to bathe their intellectual natures, and gather Divine Energy for their work of love in the service of their Master. It has been suggested by some divines and theologians, that this light was that indiscrible Shekinah or glory of Jehovah. In Eden, a symbol of love and favor to man, while loyal to his Maker—a flaming sword turning every way to keep the tree of life from man as a rebel. The *zohar* or window in the ark; a light and assurance of safety to its inmates while floating over a drowned world. The guide of Abraham, as with unswerving faith he ascended the mount of sacrifice. The glory and majesty which hung around Horeb and Sinai where God appeared to reveal His name and deliver His law. The light which hung around the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the glory which so filled the Lord’s House upon Mount Moriah, that all bowed and wor-

shipped and praised the Lord, saying, "For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever."

If this be the true exposition, the same light and glory may soon be again seen; perhaps witnessed by some now living, as seen on Mount Tabor, when He, "the desire of all nations" shall again come, in like manner as he was seen to ascend; to reward His saints and gather His ancient people the Jews, into their own land. And "His feet shall then stand upon the Mount of Olives, and His throne be established upon Mount Zion in Jerusalem forever." Then "the city shall have no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God will lighten it. For the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem." Then shall the swelling tide of righteousness and peace overflow the earth, and "Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven," be a prayer answered and fulfilled.

Glimmerings more or less clear or faint, of moral and spiritual light, was shed upon the Masonry or mysteries, connected with the religion of the old world; especially along the line of Patriarchs and Prophets, who adhered to the worship of the true God. Plato says of the ancient heathen mysteries: "It was their end and drift to restore the soul to that state from which it fell, to inculcate a holy and virtuous life, in order to a happy immortality."

Says the Rev. Dr. Oliver, one of the ablest, and the most voluminous Masonic authors of the present century—"The order appears to have been instituted and preserved, to preserve and transmit an account of the miraculous dealings of the Most High, with His people, in the infancy of the world; for at that early period, Freemasonry may be identified with religion." "The most prominent facts which our traditions and ceremonies inculcate and teach, directly or by implication, are these: That there is a God; that He created man and placed him, in a state of perfect happiness, in Paradise; that he forfeited his supreme felicity by disobedience to the Divine commands, at the suggestion of a serpent tempter; that to alleviate his repentant contrition, a Divine revelation was communicated to him, that in process of time a Savior should appear in the world to atone for their sins, and place their posterity in a condition of restoration to His favor; that for the increasing wickedness of man, God sent a deluge to purge the earth of its corruptions; and when it was again re-peopled, He renewed His gracious covenant with several of the Patriarchs: delivered his people from Egypt, led them in the wilderness, and in the Mosaic dispensation, gave more clear indications of the Messiah, by a succession of prophets, extending throughout the entire Theocracy and Monarchy; that he instituted a tabernacle worship, which contained the most indisputable types of the religion, which the Messiah should reveal and propagate. In a word, the whole system of ancient religion, whether genuine or spurious, was little else than primitive Masonry, under various names and modifications."

In this connection, it may be well to notice the fact that religion among the ancients was understood to be a system of *practical duties* to God and our fellow-men, and not, as too much the case at the present day, shorn of its glory by being dwarfed into a mere thing of sentiment and feeling—"a *being* instead of a *doing*," or as a mere system of dry and crabbed Theology, or indigestible doctrine, which however true, is but too little connected with the practical duties required in the Bible. To "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God"—or, "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world." Even the Jews—God's chosen people—professing to be guided and directed by Him, considered religion to lie in the observance of the ceremonial, and the keeping of the moral law; though a few, of whom the world was not worthy, looked through their

types and ceremonies, up to the great antitype—and worshipped in spirit and in truth.

That Religion in its broadest, purest sense, defined in our old constitutions—"Piety towards God the glorious Master Builder of the universe, and love to Mankind" was—among all who acknowledge the Bible—the *great pedestal of Freemasonry*, is abundantly evident, not only from our traditions, but also from the oldest records and manuscripts which have been preserved; for it is well known and understood, that until a comparatively modern date, no records or Manuscripts were allowed to exist, or be preserved in any branch of the order. The ancient Constitutions and charges of Freemasonry, were framed about the year 926, from such Manuscripts as could be gathered, in Greek, Latin, French, and other languages, by the brethren who met at York in England, for the purpose of forming a Grand Lodge in that city, pursuant to the summons of Prince Edwin. In these charges it is laid down as the rule of duty. "*A mason is to study the moral law as contained in the SACRED CODE; to consider it as the unerring standard of Truth and Justice; and to regulate his life and actions by its Divine precepts.*" He is strictly to observe his duty to God, by never mentioning His name, but with that awe and reverence, which is due from a creature to his Creator; to esteem Him as the Chief good, and to implore his aid in all laudable undertakings."

Freemasonry in its Organization as a Society, dates from the building of the first temple upon Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Says, Arch-deacon Mant, a learned Divine, and eminent Mason of England: "The whole system of Freemasonry underwent some revision under the command of Solomon who being acquainted with many of the most famous systems of mysterious instruction, was enabled from that knowledge, to settle among the true believers, an improved form of Masonic discipline; and from this point accordingly our present system of Freemasonry is properly to be dated."

Every well instructed Master Mason will endorse this position; for our ritual, signs, pass-words, and ceremonies—taken mostly from the Bible—prove the fact; that they were originated or arranged, at the building of the Temple on Mount Moriah, by Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram the widows son. To those who have thoroughly examined the subject, the connection between our system of Ancient Craft-Masonry, and that which existed previous to the erection of the Temple, is also equally clear. The traditions, landmarks, ceremonies and Pass-words intertwining and overlapping each other, make a connection as clear and plain, as that of the Church before and since the reformation; not a creating of something new, but a wiping off and laying aside that which deformed, or polluted, or was foreign to the body; with a burnishing, cleansing, and arranging that which had the elements of purity and permanence: which had come down from the Fountain of Light; and was therefore not only pure, but unchangeable.

To those of thoughtful minds and pious hearts, who, with sincere and proper motives entered our sanctuary, and have traversed its several apartments, splendidly furnished, and adorned with sublime thought and sentiment, illumined by the steady and chastening light which radiates from the Lamp of Life—the word and will of our Great Grand Master—always reposing upon our altar. I need not say anything as to its grandeur or beauty; or furnish any proof of its antiquity, its usefulness or its permanence. In both morality and polity it is at this day, as it has always been beyond all controversy, the most perfect human organization that ever existed. Though now planted in nearly every Nation, Kingdom, or country on this Globe, and flourishing more or less according to the degree of civilization and moral light—its native and congenial element—it is, as at the dedication of the Temple, ONE BROTHERHOOD OF FREEMASONRY! acknowledging one God.

receiving the same symbolic teachings, and having the same landmarks, signs and symbols.

As arranged by Solomon, to whom was given wisdom above any of the sons of men, and learning beyond any upon earth, true to its character as a witness for the truth, and a vehicle for keeping in mind God's dealings with His people, it of course adhered more closely to the phraseology of the Bible, and the Mosaic or ceremonial law of the Jews—Gods covenant people. All of which ceremonies were typical of the "Messiah which was for to come," so understood by every believer and reader of the Word of God. That temple has been destroyed and the Mosaic dispensation has passed away, leaving no other revealed religion than that of *Faith*—the Gospel covenant as made with Abraham the father of the faithful, and clearly adumbrated in nearly every one of the Psalms of David, used in the Temple service. The ceremonial law has been fulfilled by Him, whom St. John came to herald—Jesus the Messiah. Since that central point or era in both sacred and profane history, among those who believe that the Messiah has indeed come, Freemasonry has been held to be Christian in its character and teachings; the New Testament, explaining, illustrating, and fulfilling the old in its plainest grammatical sense, and both joined, forming one unbroken stream of Revelation—clear as the water of life, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb—are given in charge to the Worshipful Master of every lodge at his installation, as "The Holy Bible, that great light in Masonry, will guide you in the path of Truth; direct you to the Temple of happiness, and point out to you the whole duty of man."

From this, our highly esteemed Hebrew brethren, ought not anywhere or in any manner to dissent; as by doing so, *they* declare that Freemasonry is *sectarian*. They believe as we do, in the fall of our first parents from innocence to guilt—a moral death—and in the promise of a restoration through the atonement of the predicted Messiah—all this the old Testament, which we have received through them, declared and all their ceremonies clearly typified. With them, we believe all this; but all the Bible language we use many of the symbols we employ, and the universal consent of all the civilized nations on the Globe to the use of the Christian Era and the authenticity of the New Testament, testify that the Messiah for whom they still profess to look, has already come in the person of Jesus Christ; that as the great anti-type, He fulfilled all the types of their ceremonial law, made an atonement for sins, and founded Christianity as the Religion of the world. Freemasonry therefore founded upon the Bible, so far as it is religious, is to all who believe in the Divine mission of Christ, christian; and the scriptures or "Holy writings" containing the old and new Testament—*both teaching Christianity*—lies upon our altar, and moves with our processions, as our GREAT LIGHT. That this was so understood by the primitive Christian Masons, is abundantly clear not only from all tradition and history, but also from the following form of prayer, used in their Lodges, and which now stands at the head of the prescribed ceremonial of our *Grand Lodge*.

"The might of the Father of Heaven, and the wisdom of His glorious Son, through the grace and goodness of the Holy Ghost, being three persons in one God head, be with us at our beginning and give us grace so to govern us here in our living, that we may come to His bliss that shall never end.—Amen."

That this is the doctrine of "ANCIENT YORK MASONRY," and of course binding upon us, is equally clear from the history of the York convention of 926. One of the most ancient of the manuscripts there examined, has the following—"Pray we now to God Almyght and to His Swete Moder Mary Bright." And the phrase in the first of the ancient charges then framed—"That Religion in which all men agree"—was understood to mean Christi-

anity ; the only Religion ever promulgated which is Catholic in its character and provisions, and with which Freemasonry—a universal brotherhood—can be entirely congenial.

But let us not here be misunderstood. Whatever position our order may have occupied in the nations of the old world, or previous to the advent of Him who brought life and immortality to light and declared, "God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth."—Freemasonry has not, since that time, in any Christian land been considered either as a RELIGION itself, or even a *substitute* for it. Neither in its officers, its ritual or its ceremonies, does it claim to usurp in any degree, the office of that higher Organization. "THE CHURCH—the *Pillar and ground of the truth*"—built by the Redeemer, and consecrated as the channel of His richest spiritual blessings, to a redeemed world. Freemasonry lays no claim to Inspiration or spiritual authority, in the matter, of the salvation of the soul ; or to be able in any way to answer that awfully momentous question, which every son and daughter of Adam should in all earnestness ask, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

Freemasonry stands upon its own broad and immoveable basis, as a science of Light—a system of pure morality and moral Truth ; founded upon the Bible, and leading those who learn and follow its teachings to the source of all wisdom and Goodness—"Our Father in Heaven." It seeks to entice no one into its membership, but cheerfully receives such as with proper motives ask admission, and who upon examination are judged to be worthy. In this sense it is indeed the *handmaid of true Religion* ; for all its teachings are calculated to lead every attentive brother in whose heart they find a lodgment, to the footstool of Him, who alone can "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the Inspiration of His Holy Spirit, and enable us perfectly to love Him, and worthily to magnify His Holy NAME !"

To the ladies who have to day honored us with their presence I will say, *you too*, have an abiding interest in the existence, the prosperity, and the purity of our institution. During the past year, our Grand Lodge alone distributed from its charity fund \$1,500, for the relief of females. Much more it is presumed has been done by the various lodges and members in our State, which will never be made public until announced by our Master from His throne of Glory. "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in ; Naked and ye clothed me ; I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison and ye came unto me." For "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." But beyond all this ; around the entire life-path of the female relatives of Freemasons, unknown to them, hovers the guardian spirit of our order, throwing before and around them a shield of protection and an arm of support.

Shall I anticipate the question ? "If Freemasonry be the pure and useful institution you describe, why is woman excluded from its membership and teachings ?" I answer—the landmarks of our Order are unchangable, and everywhere and always the same. It was organized among operative architects, by those who built the Temple at Jerusalem, and were immediately connected with the Mosaic economy—ordained by God Himself. Under that Economy the human race was represented by males only. The offices as well as the onerous duties and works of their Religion, were assigned to the men ; who were required to leave their homes, and go up to Jerusalem, three times each year, to offer sacrifice. No such services were required of the women. Nor is there any duty or work in the tabernacle service assigned to them.

But I apprehend there is in the inner nature and constitution of woman, a philosophic reason ; which *may* underlie the regulation in the Mosaic econ-

omy, as well as account for the Masonic landmark excluding women from the labors of the lodge. It is, that woman does not require, to dispose *her* to virtue, or religion, that moral training and continued discipline, which it was and still is, the object and end of masonic teaching, to impart and impress upon the ruder sex. Woman was not formed directly from the dust of the earth, as was man; but from his flesh and bones. She is therefore, an improved creation, with not only more beauty of body and delicacy of frame, but also more refinement, and purity of soul, and affections than man. *Charity* or *love*, is the greatest of virtues, the noblest column of our order. It is the "bond of perfectness," the "fulfilling of the whole moral law." The soul of the true woman, is by nature formed for love. She can as well live without breathing, as without loving. Her affections, like the vine, are continually stretching out for something to cling to. If they attach to a noble and worthy object, they rise to the height of its nobility; if to a mean one, they still cling; and either bind up and strengthen its weakness, or cover its deformity—always beautifying and adorning; generally sheltering and protecting. That she needs not the teachings and stern discipline of Masonry, he who organized it for men alone, has borne witness, when he says—"She openeth her mouth with *wisdom*, and in her tongue is the law of *kindness*—her price is far above rubies."

Appendix.

MILTON, PA., June 24, A. D. 1863, A. L. 5863.

The Masonic Fraternity of Northumberland, Columbia, Montour, Union, Snyder, Lycoming and Clinton counties, met in this place on St. John's day, for the purpose of Dedicating the Masonic Hall.

The ceremonies of consecration were prepared by Brother Christian Frederic Knapp, D. D. Grand Master, assisted by the officers and brethren, with the usual masonic ceremonies.

To perpetuate the occasion, the undersigned committee on printing, deem it due to the Fraternity at large to briefly state the interesting ceremonies of that day. The Masonic Hall was dedicated to JEHOVAH—VIRTUE and SCIENCE—and UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE. The following Marshals were appointed to form a procession, viz :

Brother Painter, of Muncy Lodge,
 " Poke, of Williamsport Lodge,
 " Haup, of Selinsgrove Lodge,
 " Lloyd, of Muncy Lodge,

Brother Davis, of Milton Lodge,
 " Hempfield, of Lock Haven Lodge
 " Allen, of Montour Lodge,
 " John, of Bloomsburg Lodge,

who, being invested with the necessary badges of authority, proceeded to form a line of procession, in the following order :

Music.
 Tyler, with a drawn sword.
 Entered Apprentices, two and two.
 Fellow Crafts, two and two.
 Master Masons, two and two.
 Junior Deacons.
 Senior Deacons.
 Secretaries.
 Treasurers.
 Junior Wardens.
 Senior Wardens.
 Past Masters.
 Brethren of Milton Lodge, No. 256,
 two and two.
 Secretary and Treasurer of Lodge
 No. 256.

Senior and Junior Wardens of
 Lodge No. 256,
 The Holy Writings, Square and Com-
 pass, carried by the oldest member
 of Lodge No. 256, accompa-
 nied with the Chaplain,
 Rev. A. A. REECE.
 The Orator of the day,
 Brother BENJAMIN PARKE,
 and Brother J. H. McCORMICK, W. M.,
 of Lodge No. 256,
 Supported by two Deacons.
 D. D. Bro. C. F. KNAPP, Grand Master,
 supported by two Deacons.

The procession being formed at 10 o'clock A. M., in the foregoing order, marched to the Methodist Episcopal Church, when the following order of exercises took place :

Prayer—by Rev. Bro. Samuel Shannon.

Music—the "American Freemason," by the choir.

Oration—by Brother Benjamin Parke, P. D. D. G. M.

Address—by Rev. Brother A. A. Reece.

Prayer—by Rev. Bro. David C. John.

Music—"Burn's Farewell," by the Choir and Fraternity.

Benediction—by Rev. A. A. Reece.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

REV. R. E. WILSON,
 REV. J. E. FUREY,
 C. C. STRAUB, } Committee.

Masonic Odes and Songs.

ANNIVERSARY ODE.

1. 'Ere this vast world was made,
Or its foundation laid,
Our Art begun ;
Cherub and Cherubim,
Seraph and Seraphim,
Joined in one glorious hymn
Before the throne.
2. God their Grand Master was ;
Fixed their unerring laws,
By his decree ;
Faith, Hope and Charity,
Friendship and Unity,
Truth, Love and Secrecy
All laws divine.
3. Oh ! may our constant theme,
To Heaven's Great King Supremo,
Be grateful love ;
May we when e'er we meet,
Chant Hallelujah's sweet, } Three
And three times three repeat. } times.
Jehovah's praise.

THE AMERICAN FREEMASON.

1. Oh what a goodly heritage
The Lord to us hath given ;
How blest the Brothers here that pledge
Their Mason vows to Heaven ;
I sing the mystic chain that binds
Those western realms in one ;
Such loving hearts such liberal minds,
No other land has known.
2. Four thousand lights in Mason's halls,
Are gleaming in our eyes ;
Four thousand emblems on our walls,
Tell whence that gleaming is.
And when the portals move to pass
The humble seeker in,
The voice of prayer pervades the place,
And proves the Light Divine.
3. On every hill our dead they lie,
And green sprigs deck the knoll ;
Their fall was moisture to the eye,
But triumph to the soul.
Our orphans smile in every home,
Our widows' hearts are glad ;
Our light dispels the darkest gloom,
And comfort finds the sad.
4. Thus link in link, from shore to shore,
The mystic chain is bound,
Oh blended thus for ever more
May Mason's hearts be found ;
And while the heavens, on pillars sure,
Of Strength and Wisdom stand,
May Brotherhood like ours endure,
Where Strength and Wisdom blend.

DEDICATION OR CONSECRATION.

1. Great source of light and love,
To thee our songs we raise,
O in thy temple Lord above,
Hear and accept our praise.
2. Shine on this festivo day,
Succeed its hoped design,
And may our Charity display,
A love resembling thine.
3. May this fraternal band,
Now consecrated blest.
In union all distinguished stand,
In purity be drest,
4. May all the sons of peace,
Their every grace improve,
Till discord through the nations cease
And all the world be love.

BURN'S FAREWELL.

1. Adieu, a heart-warm fond adieu,
Ye brothers of the mystic tie ;
Ye favored and enlightened few,
Companions of my social joy.
Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing fortune's slidd'ry ba'
With melting heart and brimsful eye,
I'll mind you still when far awa.
2. Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful festive night ;
Oft honored with supreme command,
Presided o'er the sons of light,
And by that hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but craftsmen ever saw ;
Strong memory on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa.
3. May freedom, harmony and love,
Unite us in the grand design,
Beneath the omniscient eye above,
The glorious Architect divine ;
That you may keep the unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
'Till order bright completely shine,
Shall be my prayer when far awa.
4. And you farewell whose merits claim
Justly that highest badge to wear,
Heaven bless your honor'd noble name,
To Masonry and Scotia dear ;
A last request permit me here ;
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the bard that's far awa.